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Testimony of Rochelle Palache, District Director, 32BJ SEIU
Senate Bills No. 21, 28, 29
March 3, 2022

Thank you to the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee for holding today's hearing. My name is Rochelle Palache and I am the Connecticut State Director and a vice president of SEIU 32BJ. 32BJ represents over 4,500 men and women in the state of Connecticut and 175,000 members up and down the East Coast. Our members form the backbone of the property industry – building workers, security officers, and office, school, theatre, stadium and window cleaners.

Connecticut is the third most unequal state as the top 1% take home 27.3% of all income and someone in the top 1% of income earners earns 37.2 times as much as our lowest income residents.¹ Senate Bills No. 21, 28, 29 would serve as remedial measures to help the vast majority of Connecticut residents and particularly Connecticut workers. Senate Bill No. 21 would slightly raise real property taxes on wealthy landowners by \$1.00 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value to provide funding for special education and to fully fund the settlement costs of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* lawsuit which related to racial inequities in Connecticut's public education. According to one study, Connecticut was the third worst state when it comes to racial equality in education,² this funding is absolutely necessary to comply with the additional requirements agreed to into the settlement. Senate Bill No. 28 would provide a tax surcharge on capital gains of 1% but only for those who are in the highest income bracket, and therefore most able to afford this additional surcharge. Senate Bill No. 29 would increase the earned income tax credit from 31.5% to 41.5% starting in 2022 thus providing a significant boost to Connecticut families. These modest measures would help reduce income and racial inequality in Connecticut.

Moreover, we also advocate for a more comprehensive package beyond these bill to (1) raise income taxes on the highest earners, (2) increase corporate income taxes, (3) establish a surcharge for highest earners, (4) institute a digital ad tax on large tech companies, (5) establish a child tax credit, (6) providing pandemic pay to essential workers, and (7) create a transparency mechanism to shine light on how much large corporations are paying in taxes.

In order to ensure that all Connecticut families and workers benefit from a fairer state, please vote in support of SB 21, 28, and 29. Thank you for your time.

¹ *Unequal States of America: Income Inequality in Connecticut*, ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE (July, 2018), <https://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-of-america/#/Connecticut>

² Rob Palansky, CT ranks among the worst in terms of racial equality in education, WFSB (June 24, 2020), https://www.wfsb.com/news/ct-ranks-among-the-worst-in-terms-of-racial-equality-in-education/article_7da87d1e-b60f-11ea-a372-bb1ff70b0355.html